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SUBJECT: BELGIANS EXPRESS INCREASED CONCERNS ABOUT DRC  
SITUATION TO A/S FRAZER

Classified By: Ambassador Sam Fox, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: During a meeting on June 26, 2007 with A/S Frazer, Belgian MFA Permanent Secretary Grauls expressed great concern about the Kabila regime's alarming loss of popularity, continuing instability in Eastern Congo, and the looming threat of another Rwandan incursion. The Belgian side agreed with A/S Frazer's suggestion that the UNSRSG should arrange regular contacts between Kabila and a limited subset of the diplomatic corps in Kinshasa, or if he does not do so, that the Belgians and South African should take the lead. On Darfur, Grauls said the Belgians would meet soon with the French to learn more about their plans for dealing with the impact of the crisis in Chad. A/S Frazer also detailed USG frustrations in working with the South African delegation in New York. End summary.

12. (U) Belgian MFA Permanent Secretary Grauls hosted AF A/S Frazer for one hour on June 26. Ambassador Fox, AF/RSA Deputy Director Lanier, and Brussels Polcouns (notetaker) were present on the U.S. side. Joining Grauls were MFA Director for Africa Trouveroy, Director for UNSC Affairs Brieven, and the head of the MFA's Great Lakes Division, Ambassador Adam. In addition to the situation in the DRC, Darfur, and South Africa's role on the Security Council (discussed below), A/S Frazer also briefed on developments in the Horn of Africa.

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Situation in Congo -- Bad and (Probably) Getting Worse  
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13. (C) Grauls provided a notably bleak assessment of the situation in the DRC. He professed to be particularly concerned about the steady plunge in President Kabila's standing with various publics, including, notably, the voters in eastern Congo who put him into office. The only bright spot came from the newly elected parliament, where there are at least a few "positive" legislators. Kabila's declining fortunes were largely the result of his continuing "invisibility" with the public, and the anti-democratic tendency of the people who surround him. Matters could come to a head, Grauls predicted, in early September, a time when the failure to pay salaries regularly would prevent many students from paying their school fees. The worsening security situation in the east was exacerbating the government's problems in the capital. So too were fears that a fed up Kagame government in Rwanda might try to force the issue with a cross-border raid.

14. (C) Under the circumstances, Grauls thought the time ripe to revisit the "son of CIAT" question. Kabila needed to "feel the heat." Although dealt with in the recent MONUC renewal UNSCR, the Belgian side feared the process of fashioning a new consultative mechanism was moving too slowly. A/S Frazer agreed on the need for such a mechanism, but urged chiefs of mission on the scene,

specifically Belgium and South Africa, to take the lead if the UN Special Representative is not organizing the meetings with Kabila. Grauls welcomed this news, adding that the U.S. should do all necessary to get Rwanda to cool its rhetoric about the security threat Kigali faced from out of Eastern Congo.

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Darfur Next Steps  
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15. (C) In discussing the just concluded Ministerial on Darfur, A/S Frazer made clear that the U.S. would delay its plans to impose additional UNSC sanctions, but keep the idea alive since it probably would become necessary to brandish the sanctions weapon again at some later date. After detailing plans for the follow on resolution, she described USG concerns that the current AU force, inadequate as it is, might collapse without urgent action to avoid this. Grauls expressed appreciation for her briefing, noting specifically that the Belgian government agreed with USG thinking on how to fashion a resolution laying out a mandate for the hybrid force. For Grauls, the key was to obtain as much as possible from the Bashir government under the current, relatively helpful situation, and then start pushing hard again when necessary.

16. (C) The Belgian side expressed particular interest in the situation in Chad, where the French have suggested using their forces as a security unit outside the camps. African Affairs Director Trouveroy said he would be meeting with the French soon to learn more about this plan. A/S Frazer said she had a positive reaction to the initial outline of French government plans.

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South African Role on the Security Council  
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17. (C) In response to questions from the Belgian side, A/S Frazer spoke at length about the ups and downs of the U.S. relationship in New York with the South Africans. Personality of the South African Permanent Representative was a key factor in explaining some U.S. frustrations, she argued, but so was the important institutional issue created by an occasional divergence in policy between the South African Presidency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The key to success with the South Africans was early consultations.

18. (C) Ambassador Grauls said he believed the problem might have a slightly different basis. The South Africans simply did not share the "P5 worldview" and, this being their first time on the Security Council, they were torn between representing other African interests and promoting their own. Grauls also decried a "toxic triangle" that included the South African Permanent Representative in New York and several senior officials at the MFA in Pretoria.

Fox

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